

Managing National Assessment Report

Southland Boys' High School

June 2019

What this report is about

This report summarises NZQA's review of how effectively Southland Boys' High School:

- has addressed issues identified through NZQA's Managing National Assessment review and through the school's own internal review
- manages assessment practice for national qualifications
- manages internal and external moderation
- makes use of and manages assessment-related data
- maintains the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicates them to staff, students and families.

The summary section evaluates the school's overall effectiveness and provides a broad overview of the review's key findings for all readers. The remaining sections provide detail of these findings for school managers.

Why we review how schools are managing national assessment

The purpose of a Managing National Assessment review is:

- to confirm, in combination with the most recent Education Review Office report, that schools are meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011* (CAAS) and its *Guidelines* (CAAS Guidelines) in order to maintain their consent to assess; and
- to help schools achieve valid, fair, accurate and consistent internal assessment according to the requirements of the *Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2019* (Assessment Rules).

What are possible outcomes

Outcomes may include NZQA:

- requiring action from the school where an issue is identified that significantly impacts on the school meeting the requirements of their *Consent to Assess*
- agreeing action with the school where an issue has been identified that could become significant if not addressed
- making suggestions for the school to consider to enhance good assessment practice.

What this review includes

The review has three components:

- The annual external moderation of the school's internal assessment.
- A check on specific aspects of assessment systems on an annual basis.
- A check on the school's assessment systems at least once every four years.

How we conducted this review

The review includes examination of documentation from a range of sources and interviewing key stakeholders.

Prior to the visit the school provided the following documents:

- information on their actions and self-review since the last Managing National Assessment report
- *Southland Boys' High School, NZQF Internal Assessment, Staff Procedures, 2019* (Staff Handbook)
- *Southland Boys' High School, NZQF Internal Assessment, Student Guidelines, 2019* (Student Handbook)
- *Southland Boys' High School, Assessment Policy NCEA*
- a sample of course outlines for Years 11, 12 and 13.

The School Relationship Manager met with:

- the Principal's Nominee
- Senior Master (Curriculum)
- Heads of Faculty for:
 - English
 - Technology
- Heads of Department for:
 - Digital Technology
 - Media Studies
- three students.

There was a report-back session with the Rector, Principal's Nominee and Senior Master (Curriculum) at the end of the review visit to highlight good practice and areas for improvement, with suggested strategies, next steps and to agree on any action required.

SUMMARY

Southland Boys' High School

5 June 2019

Consent to assess confirmed

This review found that the school is meeting the requirements of the *Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011*. No significant issues with the school's management of national assessment were found. The school's own review mechanisms allow them to identify and respond to most issues. Therefore, it is anticipated that the next Managing National Assessment review will be conducted within three years.

What the school is doing well

As part of their vision Southland Boys' High School aims to motivate and inspire all students to achieve their best. This is demonstrated through their current self-review focusing on understanding the needs of individual students and sharing practice that meets those needs.

The school is responsive to external review and has implemented the required action item from the 2016 Managing National Assessment report. This resolves the significant issue recorded, but this report has an action to further build on the improvements made.

Assessment processes are effectively managed to meet the qualifications needs of students. The school differentiates assessment opportunities by offering multiple course choices in certain subject areas and personalisation of entries for identified students. Opportunities are extended by using external providers to offer courses and assessment of standards the school does not have the capacity to deliver. An increased number of students are being identified and provided with approved special assessment conditions. These initiatives all contribute towards assisting students to improve their assessment outcomes.

Internal moderation processes, responses to external moderation, and monitoring by the Principal's Nominee ensure that only credible results are reported to NZQA. This is reflected in the overall level of agreement between teacher and NZQA external moderator judgements.

Data management and use effectively supports student achievement outcomes and ensures the timely reporting of results to NZQA. Achievement data is analysed to review teacher practice and courses. Students use the student management system to check their results and progress towards qualifications. Academic tutors monitor student progress and identify those at risk of not achieving to their potential. Where required they instigate the provision of support processes with class teachers and Deans.

The school has a range of communications that explain to staff, students and their families, NCEA and school assessment procedures.

Areas for improvement

To make the monitoring of internal moderation more robust the Principal's Nominee should develop a shared document showing a summary of the outcome of his visits to each department. This will help give senior management assurance that internal moderation has been completed each year for every internal standard assessed. It will also assist with providing continuity of knowledge to prevent any potential issues arising from staffing changes.

Processes are in place so that students and staff check the accuracy of results reported to NZQA, but the checks also need to cover the withdrawing of entries in internal standards. The school must ensure that all internal entries to NZQA have a result reported or are withdrawn if the student has not had an adequate opportunity to be assessed. This would mean that data sent reflects the assessment undertaken and ensures that students have an accurate assessment programme recorded to assist them with tracking their progress.

Only 75 percent of students register their NZQA Learner Login, meaning a substantial number of students cannot utilise the functions it provides. The school needs a system in place to ensure students have access. When students do not register, they cannot check the accuracy of results reported to NZQA, apply for reconsiderations and/or reviews of external assessments, or order certificates and their New Zealand Record of Achievement.

Some changes and additions to the staff and student handbooks are required so that they are current and accurate, including documenting the changed process for the monitoring of internal moderation. More readily available information explaining how to gain certificate and course endorsements may support the school's goal of increasing the number of Merit and Excellence endorsements gained.

Agreed action

The school agreed that a number of actions will improve the quality of their assessment systems. These are to:

- maintain a shared record of the outcomes from the monitoring of internal moderation
- ensure that all entries in internally assessed standards made to NZQA have a corresponding result attached or are withdrawn if there has not been an adequate opportunity to be assessed
- ensure that students can access the functions provided in their Learner Login
- review and update student and staff handbooks so that they provide full and accurate information.

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13 August 2019

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FINDINGS OF THIS REVIEW

How effectively has the school responded to external and internal review?

External review

Evidence for external review actions having been appropriately and effectively addressed. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iv, 3iv-3v)

Action Items from 14 September 2016 Managing National Assessment report

The review identified a significant issue that was checked by NZQA after 12 months to review the progress made. The school was required to:

- adequately address actions items from the previous Managing National Assessment review (CAAS Guidelines 3v).

This referred to an action that had not been completed from the 3 July 2014 Managing National Assessment report when the school had been required to ensure internal moderation is adequately monitored by senior management and document the process by which this will happen (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii).

The 12-month check in 2017 found progress had been made with resolving the issue. At the time, a central part of the monitoring process was submitting each *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet* to the Principal's Nominee, but the focus has now changed to him visiting departments. The Principal's Nominee visits each department during the year to discuss their processes, sight evidence of them being followed and to put in place actions to resolve any issues he identifies. His visits are recorded in his diary. His knowledge of the completion of moderation is also supplemented by some departments continuing to submit their internal moderation cover sheets, informal catch-ups, and discussions in Head of Faculty/Head of Department meetings. Any concerns are shared with the Senior Master (Curriculum).

These actions have resolved the significant issue.

To ensure this system is robust the outcomes from the Principal's Nominee's visits to departments should be systematically summarised in a shared record. This would clearly show that all departments have been checked, better inform senior management and mitigate possible issues arising from any personnel changes. Staff documentation also needs updating to reflect the change in monitoring processes.

The 2016 review also had one agreed action, to update the staff handbook to include information on derived grades. This has been actioned.

Response to external moderation outcomes The school has effective processes to respond to external moderation. These ensure senior management are fully informed of issues and aware of the actions in place to resolve them. Feedback from external moderation shows departments do not have widespread concerns.

Staff reflect on each report and are encouraged to seek clarification and/or appeal. They complete a response sheet on each standard for the Principal's Nominee, including any actions needed to resolve concerns. Any reports that have an outcome of *Not Consistent* or show a department has other patterns of concerns lead to a meeting with the Principal's Nominee and Senior Master (Curriculum) in Term 4 to discuss the outcomes and actions that are being put in place. The outcomes and results of actions are included in department reports the following year.

Internal review

Evidence for the school using its self-review and evaluation processes to identify areas for on-going improvement in assessment practice and procedures, which are then actioned. (CAAS Guidelines 3iv)

The school effectively reviews its assessment-related processes in response to identified issues and to explore potential improvements. The Principal's Nominee leads review of assessment processes. Curriculum review is driven by the Rector and Board of Trustees, with input from other staff and student voice. There is currently a focus on improving staff knowledge of each student, and departments knowing what practice works and sharing that information. This links with targets in the strategic plan to increase the number of students gaining Merit and Excellence results and endorsements.

Strategies to improve student achievement outcomes Various changes in practice have been designed to improve student achievement and the effectiveness of these changes are being monitored. Improved use of data is central to improved understanding of each student and what is working for them. The school has introduced the recording of engagement grades from each teacher which are summarised in a weekly engagement report. This is shared with students, parents and tutors aims to promote discussion about how involved students are with their learning in each subject. This information is also supplemented with credit estimates which are updated when assessments are completed to allow for earlier proactive, rather than reactive, interventions.

Systems have been put in place to improve the sharing of information about priority learners, with a focus not just on students at risk of not achieving, but also to support students to gain Merit and Excellence endorsements. To help support students to gain endorsements a formal practice exam week has been reinstated, partly to emphasise the importance of success in external assessments. The introduction of 'caps' for academic excellence also aims to raise the profile of academic success.

Teacher enquiry contributes to review and change in practice. A blended learning group is exploring cross-curricular links, such as Biology and Media Studies investigating one assessment covering two standards to ensure assessment is in real contexts that engage students in a meaningful way.

Review of courses The structure of Year 10 courses has been reviewed in relation to success with NCEA. Core subjects have been retained but students choose from a range of optional courses. This aims to allow them to develop a deeper understanding of the skills required to succeed in the subjects they wish to continue to pursue from Year 11 onwards.

The school has also reviewed the assessment in Year 10 of standards contributing to Level 1 NCEA. The purpose of the assessment is to give students the opportunity to achieve standards that contribute to the NCEA numeracy and literacy requirements. There has been a change in focus though, reducing the number of assessments and altering the contexts to help ensure that students perform well and to consider their well-being by reducing the stress of assessment. For example, an English standard is being assessed through an existing speech competition.

Student voice is used to consider whether current courses meet student need. This has resulted in the creation of new courses such as Theatre Tech.

Internal self-review is an ongoing process The school also plans ahead with self-review. Future areas of focus already identified include investigating the use of resubmissions to ensure they are being used equitably, and the possible provision of half-year courses as students want areas of learning that support their desired pathways, not necessarily a full course of study.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the school's response to external review and its self-review of assessment systems and practice. Senior management undertakes to:

- maintain a shared record of the outcomes from the monitoring of internal moderation.

How effectively does the school's assessment practice meet the needs of its students?

Evidence for assessment practice meeting student needs. (CAAS Guidelines 2.5v-vii, 2.6i & ii and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2019 5.5)

Southland Boys' High School has effective processes and procedures for meeting the assessment needs of their students by:

- providing differentiated assessment through offering multiple courses within some core subjects, and when appropriate, tailoring contexts and assessment opportunities to individuals within a course
- extending assessment opportunities by using a range of external providers to deliver:
 - courses the school is unable to offer
 - assessment against standards related to career pathways
- targeting a support programme in Year 10 to build up student skills in most core subjects to help them to succeed with NCEA courses in Year 11
- increasing the number of students who have access to special assessment conditions through earlier identification and trialling of support
- clearly informing staff of students' special assessment conditions and readily providing appropriate assistance
- closely monitoring and supporting students' progress in gaining NCEA literacy and numeracy requirements.

Southland Boys' High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- monitoring the authenticity of student work during the assessment and marking process
- managing missed and late assessment, appeals and breaches of the assessment rules
- providing valid resubmission and further assessment opportunities
- collecting credible evidence of student achievement for derived grade applications
- meeting the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1993*.

Māori and Pacific student engagement and success in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects The school is currently working towards improved equity by reviewing practice through a focus on 'What works for Māori works for all' directed by the Invercargill Community of Learning. Careers counselling also aims to emphasise the wide range of pathways open to all students.

No action required

No issues with the school's management of assessment for national qualifications were identified during this review.

How effectively does the school's internal and external moderation assure assessment quality?

Evidence for internal and external moderation ensuring assessment quality. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6iii & vi, and Assessment (including Examination) Rules for Schools with Consent to Assess 2019 6.4b)

Southland Boys' High School has effective processes and procedures for managing internal moderation by:

- ensuring all new or modified assessment materials are critiqued prior to use
- using subject specialists, within and outside the school, to verify a purposefully selected sample of student work to ensure assessment judgements are consistent with the standard
- retaining and updating work to be used as exemplars for students and benchmarking for assessor judgements
- following appropriate processes for moderating Industry Training Organisation administered standards
- documenting the quality assurance process on an *Internal Moderation Cover Sheet*.

Southland Boys' High School has effective processes and procedures for managing external moderation by:

- negotiating appropriate changes to the moderation plan
- selecting samples of student work randomly to NZQA requirements
- ensuring student work is available for submission by the Principal's Nominee knowing the location of the materials
- increasing the number of standards submitted digitally and starting to take advantage of the opportunity to submit work as soon as the internal moderation process has been completed to get timely feedback from external moderators.

Focus on reducing workload by considering grade verification requirements for sufficiency The school should consider providing staff with further guidance on sufficient grade verification by the strategic selection of student work.

Strategic selection has the potential to reduce verifier workload, without compromising the quality of the assurance process. There is no fixed, or predetermined, number of pieces of student work that must be verified. The sample size will be determined by factors such as assessor experience, feedback from external moderation, the availability of good quality grade boundary exemplars, and number of students assessed.

Most staff verify work at grade boundaries, but some agreed they could perhaps reduce the number and still meet verification requirements without compromising the validity of their assessment.

Encourage more subject areas to nominate standards for external moderation Suggesting standards for external moderation ensures teachers receive feedback on standards their self-review has targeted as important, and increases engagement with the process. The school should consider how they can effectively encourage staff to nominate standards for external moderation. Over the last two years, seven

percent of the standards moderated were selected by the school, but this only covered three subject areas.

For consideration

To extend school practice in assurance of assessment quality, the school is encouraged to consider:

- increasing the number of subject areas nominating standards for external moderation.

How effectively does the school manage and make use of assessment-related data?

Evidence for data management and use supporting student achievement outcomes. (CAAS Guidelines 2.6v, 2.7i-iii)

Southland Boys' High School effectively uses assessment-related data to support achievement outcomes for students by:

- analysing results in departments, with a focus on added value, as well as comparing results with previous years and national data to inform the modification of courses and teaching practice
- submitting all entries in the first data file to NZQA, ensuring a student's full assessment programme can be considered when forward-planning and tracking progress.

Southland Boys' High School reports accurate achievement data by:

- reporting results to NZQA on a timely and regular basis
- reporting Not Achieved results as appropriate
- closely managing late entries
- only reporting results for standards for which the school holds Consent to Assess, or using the correct code of external providers where the Principal's Nominee has a copy of a current memorandum of understanding
- resolving any issues highlighted in the *Key Indicator Checklist*.

Student progress effectively tracked to improve achievement outcomes Data is used to effectively track student progress with a focus on improving student achievement outcomes.

Students track their results using their portal to the student management system. They regularly discuss their achievement, along with recorded engagement grades, with their academic tutor. Any issues are documented in the student management system and if necessary, concerns are forwarded to either subject teachers or Deans, so they can support the student. Interventions can include tutorials, a study plan, mentoring, changes in the standards being assessed or the course studied, and individual education plans. Deans also meet weekly with tutors to discuss students.

Ensure all internal entries are withdrawn if a result is not recorded The school needs to ensure that all internal standard entries to NZQA have a result reported, or are withdrawn if the student has not had an adequate opportunity to be assessed. This will ensure that data sent reflects the assessment undertaken and support the current system of teacher and student checks of the accuracy of entries and results. It will also ensure that students have an accurate assessment programme recorded to assist them with tracking their progress. The Principal's Nominee believes this can be resolved by clarifying the current process to ensure staff understand that extra entries can be added if a student completes an assessment after the final data file has been submitted to NZQA.

Ensure students can access the functions provided through the NZQA Learner login The school should have a robust process in place to ensure that students register their NZQA Learner Login so they can access the functions it provides. When students do not register, they cannot check their personal details and the

reporting of results to NZQA, apply for reconsiderations and/or reviews of external assessments, or order certificates and their New Zealand Record of Achievement.

Over recent years 25 percent of students have not registered their Learner Login.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to improve the management and use of assessment-related data. Senior management undertakes to:

- ensure that all entries in internal standards made to NZQA have a corresponding result attached or are withdrawn if there has not been an adequate opportunity to be assessed
- ensure that students can access the functions provided in their Learner Login.

How effectively does the school's communication inform staff, and students and their families about assessment?

Evidence for school communication promoting understanding of assessment. (CAAS Guidelines 2.4i(f), 2.4v, 2.6vii, 2.7ii(b))

Southland Boys' High School has effective processes and procedures for:

- ensuring students receive clear and consistent outlines, both physically and digitally, for all courses they undertake
- communicating assessment policy and procedure to staff using a range of methods.

Southland Boys' High School assists common understanding of assessment practice by:

- annually distributing to each student a physical copy of the student handbook and having it available online
- the Principal's Nominee talking to Year 11 students about assessment policy and procedures
- presenting NZQA and school assessment related processes at an options evening in Term 3
- annually distributing the staff handbook and having it available online
- weekly NCEA memo emails to Heads of Faculty and Heads of Department and, as required, to groups of staff, reminding them of procedures and deadlines
- inducting new staff to familiarise them with assessment and moderation processes.

Changes required to staff and student handbooks School publications require some alterations and additions to give full and accurate information. This includes:

- updating the process for monitoring internal moderation so that it reflects current practice
- adding that appeals can cover the whole assessment process, not just the grade awarded
- including information on privacy considerations for student results and the use of their work as exemplars
- stating in the student handbook what student work can provide evidence for derived grades
- changing terminology for incidents where internal assessment opportunities are affected by circumstances beyond a students' control, to not include the phrase *Compassionate Consideration*
- adding information on how to achieve an NCEA certificate, certificate endorsement, and course endorsement.

Information covering gaining certificates and endorsements is shared with students and parents through the school distributing NZQA publications. Including it in the student handbook would reinforce this and allow students to refer to it more easily. Students interviewed said it was not until class teachers explained endorsements that they fully understood them. Better student understanding of the requirements could support the school's goal in increasing Merit and Excellence endorsements.

Agreed action

NZQA and senior management agree on the following action to maintain the currency of assessment policy and procedures, and communicate them to staff, students and families. Senior management undertakes to:

- review and update student and staff handbooks so they provide full and accurate information.